REMARKS

Claims 1-22 were pending in the present application. Claim 1 was amended, and claims 20-22 were canceled. As a result of this amendment, claims 1-19 are pending. Reexamination and reconsideration are requested in light of the accompanying amendments and remarks.

Applicants confirm election of Group I (claims 1-19) without traverse.

The rejection of claims 1-5, 9-11, 13-15, and 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campanella (U.S. Patent No. 5,900,311) in view of Parish (U.S. Patent No. 5,843,221) has been overcome. Campanella teaches method of making a polyester composite. The method includes coating the surface of a mold with a gel coat, applying a skin laminate over the partially cured gel coat, applying a fiber reinforcement to the skin laminate, closing the mold, and injecting a one phase matrix precursor while the mold is under vacuum. The one phase composite matrix precursor comprises a polyester, a reactive monomer, and a low-profile additive. Abstract. The skin laminate contains a thermosetting resin, such as vinyl ester, vinyl ester modified epoxy, and vinyl ester modified unsaturated polyester, with a high fiber content, about 25 to about 45% fiber, typically chopped fiber or a continuous strand fiber mat. Col. 5, lines 38-47, and col. 6, lines 14-16.

Parish describes a sprayable, high solids, low-volatiles filler composition which is used as a coating on a variety of substrates. The coating is applied to a substrate in a thickness up to 6 mils. The filler composition provides a surface which is immediately suitable for subsequent application of top coats. The filler composition includes a filler/glazing component, a catalyst component, and a second organic solvent component. The filler/glazing component contains vinyl ester or vinyl ester in combination with polyester resin, filler, thixotropic clay, accelerator, and a first organic solvent.

Campanella cannot properly be combined with Parish because there is no motivation to combine the references. The skin laminate of Campanella contains fiber reinforcement, which helps to provide strength to the molded part. It would defeat Campanella's purpose of providing

a high strength molded part to use Parish's composition as the skin laminate because it does not include any fiber reinforcement.

Even if the references are properly combinable, the combination does not render the claimed invention obvious. Campanella does not teach or suggest "applying a layer of fiberglass reinforcement over the cured barrier composition," as claimed. Campanella teaches that the gel coat is partially cured before the skin laminate is applied. However, the patent does not teach or suggest curing the skin laminate before the fiber reinforcement is applied. See col. 6, lines 5-13.

Thus, claims 1-5, 9-11, 13-15, and 17-19 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made over Campanella in view of Parish.

The rejection of claims 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campanella and Parish, and further in view of Haraldsson (U.S. Patent No. 6,558,608) has been overcome. Haraldsson is cited as teaching a vacuum-assisted resin transfer molding process. However, Haraldsson does not remedy the deficiencies of Campanella and Parish. Therefore, claims 6-8 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made over Campanella in view of Parish and further in view of Haraldsson.

The rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campanella and Parish, and further in view of Kia (U.S. Publication 2004/0038059) has been overcome. Kia is cited as teaching the use of hollow glass microspheres as a filler in a barrier layer of a composite. However, Kia does not remedy the deficiencies of Campanella and Parish. Thus, claim 12 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made over Campanella in view of Parish and further in view of Kia.

The rejection of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campanella and Comstock (U.S. Patent No. 4,288,571) has been overcome. Comstock discloses a sheet molding composition which includes an unsaturated polyester, a low profile additive, monomer, peroxide accelerator, fillers and thickening agent. Col. 1, lines 57-64, col. 5, lines 24-35, and col. 6, lines 38-43. The low profile additive is a vinyl ester resin, and it is included to reduce shrinkage. Col. 1, lines 25-48. The sheet molding composition is molded under pressure. Col. 8, lines 34-42.

Contrary to the examiner's position, it would not have been obvious to use Comstock's composition as a skin laminate in Campanella's process. Comstock's sheet molding compound is the material which is to be molded into the final parts, such as automobile fenders, dashboards and the like. See col. 1, lines 10-24, and lines 49-56, and col. 6, lines 65-68. It might be substituted for Campanella's composite, but it would not be used as the skin laminate layer in the molded part.

In addition, even if Comstock's sheet molding could be used as Campanella's skin laminate, it would not render the claimed invention obvious. The claimed process recites "applying a layer of fiberglass reinforcement over the cured barrier composition." However, in Campanella's process, the application and partial curing of the gel coat layer and the application of the skin laminate are open mold processes. See col. 6, lines 5-13. If Comstock's sheet molding compound was applied over the gel coat layer, it would not be cured before the layer of fiberglass reinforcement was applied because sheet molding compound requires pressure to cure it.

Therefore, claim 16 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made over Campanella in view of Comstock.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that, in view of the above amendment and remarks, the application is now in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request that claims 1-19 be passed to allowance.

If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding the present application, he is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,
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